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fectually to the increase of population to the accriss-
ment of commerce and would in a short time rise the
City one of the first the world will contain.

it is in this manner and in this manner only I con-
ceive the business may be conducted to a certainty of
the attainment of that success. I wished to promot
in the delination of a plan wholly new and which com-
bined on a grand scale will require exertions above
what is the idea of many but the which not being be-
yond your power to procur made me promise the secur-
ing of them, as I remain assured you will conceive it
essential to pursue with dignity the operation of an
undertaking of a magnitude so worthy of the concern
of a grand empire in the compleat achievement of the
which the Honor of this is become so eminently con-
cern and over whose progress the eyes of every other
nation envying the opportunity denied them will stand
judge.

I have the Honor to be with respect and submission,
Your most humble obedient servant,

P. C. L'ENFANT.

Per

The President of the United States.

EARLY MAPS AND SURVEYORS
OF THE
CITY OF WASHINGTON, D. C.

[Read before the Society, Feb. 18, 1895]

By John Stewart.

Washington City came into existence by an Act of
Congress, begun and held at the City of New York, on
Monday, the 4th day of January, 1790, entitled, "An

Act for establishing the temporary and permanent seat of the Government of the United States," in which, among other things, it was enacted:

"That a district or territory not exceeding ten miles square, to be located, as hereafter directed, on the River Potomac, at some place between the mouths of the Eastern Branch and Connogocheque, be, and the same is hereby, accepted for the permanent seat of the Government of the United States." * * *

"That the President of the United States be authorized to appoint, and by supplying vacancies happening from refusal to act, or other causes, to keep in appointment as long as may be necessary, three Commissioners, who, or any two of them, shall, under the direction of the President, survey, and by proper metes and bounds, define and limit, a district of territory under the limitations above mentioned. And the district so defined, limited, and located, shall be deemed the district accepted by this act for the permanent seat of the Government of the United States."

Under virtue of the above-recited Act of Congress, approved July 16, 1790, the President of the United States, by letters patent, bearing date the 22d day of January, 1791, appointed Thomas Johnson and Daniel Carroll, of Maryland, and David Stuart, of Virginia, Commissioners. In a letter by President Washington to Colonel William Dickens, of Georgetown, dated March 2, 1791, he states, "an eminent French military engineer starts for Georgetown to examine and survey the site of the Federal city."

The talented and memorable Major Peter Charles L'Enfant, formerly a French engineer officer, who had served honorably under General Washington during the Revolutionary War, was at this time established in a very profitable business as a civil engineer in the

city of New York. Messrs Andrew and Benjamin Ellcott and Isaac Roberdeau, as assistants, arrived at Georgetown on February 4, 1791. Their pay commenced on that day.

L'Enfant says, "That through President Washington's urgent desire to devote his entire energy to fix the site, prepare the plan, and undertake the engineering of the Federal City, he gave up his business, his fortune, in New York City, without a thought of compensation, owing to his confidence in the President." He arrived at Georgetown on March 9, 1791, and immediately set to work making a general survey of the territory and preparing a voluminous report to the Executive, in which he pointed out that "the water-side, from the mouth of the Eastern Branch at Carroll borough, as far up as Evans Point, a distance of above three miles, the frequent winding of the shore from many natural wet dock which, for not having everywhere a great depth of water, nevertheless could become very convenient for the establishing of naval store and for arsenals, the which, as well as warehouse for merchantmen, might safely be raised on the water edge without fear of impeding the prospect from on the Heigh flat behind—there were the level ground on the water and all round were it descend, but most particularly on that part terminating in a ridge to Jenkins' Hill, and running in a parallel with and at half mile off from the River Potowmack, separated by a low ground intersected with three grand streems. Many of the most desirable positions offer for to erect the publique edifices thereon. From these height every grand building would rear with a majestick aspect over the country all round and might be advantageously seen from twenty miles off, while contiguous to the first settlement of the city they would there stand to

ages in a center point to it, facing on the grandest prospect, of both of the branch of Potowmack with the town of Alexandry in front, seen in its fullest extent over many points of land projecting from the Mareland and Virginia shore in a manner as add much to the prospective at the end of which the cape of Great Hunting Creek appear directly were a corner stone (No. 1) of the Federal District is to be placed, and in the room of which a majestick Colum or a grand Peysamid being erected would produce the happyest effect and compleatly finish the landskape. These in every respect advantageously situated the Federal City would soon grew of itself and spread as the branches of a tre dos toward were they met with most nourishment. * * * having a bridge laid over the Eastern branch some were above Evans pt. there the natural limit of the eastern branch may be extanded while in its western extremity may be included Georgetown itself which being situated at the head of Grand navigation of the Potowmack should be favoured with same advantage of a better communication with the southern by having also a bridge erected over the Potowmack at the place of the two Sisters were nature would effectually favor the undertaking.

then between those two points begining the settle-
ment of the Grand City on the bank of the eastern
branch and promoting the first improvement all along
of the Heigh flat as far as were it end on Jenkins' Hill
would place the City Central to the ground left open to
its agrandisement which most undoubtedly would be
rapid toward both extremity, provided nevertheless
that attention be paid immediately on laying the first
out line of the establishment to open a direct and large
avenue from the bridge on the Potowmack to that on

the eastern branch the which should be well level passing a cross Georgetown and over the most advantageous ground for prospect through the grand city, with a wide way paved for heavy carriage and walk, on each side planted with double rows of trees," drawing the President's attention to many other natural existing formations of land and water, requiring but little expense to make the site of a Federal City on the Potomac River, between the Eastern Branch and Georgetown, proportionate to the greatness of a city where the Capitol of a powerful Empire ought to exist.

On June 22, 1791, he stated to the Executive: "In framing the plan here annexed for the intended Federal City * * * my whole attention was given to the contribution of the general distribution of the ground local, as to an object of the most immediate moment, and have in consequence to solicit your indulgence in submitting my ideas in an incomplete drawing, only correct as to the situation and distances of objects. * * * I next made the distribution regular, with streets at right angles, north-south and east-west; but afterwards I opened others on various directions as avenues to and from every principle place, to which they will serve as does the main veins in the animal body to diffuse life through smaller vessels in quickening the active motion to the heart."

In this and in his first report he recommends as sites for the United States Capitol and for the President's Palace, the grounds whereon those buildings now stand. He submitted this report to the President at Georgetown.

On August 19, 1791, L'Enfant wrote the President, saying: "The highest of my ambition gratified in having met with your approbation in the project of the plan which I have now the honor of presenting to you,

altered agreeable to your directions." This was his second plan, and he prepared an exact copy of it on a larger scale, which was designated, "L'Enfant's Large Outline Plan (a) of the City." (See p. 53.) It was used by the surveyors in laying out the city, and from it was copied the plan from which the first sale of city lots was made, on the 17th, 18th and 19th of October, 1791. This copy (b) comprehended all the squares and numbered (a, p. 57) within K street on the north, F street on the south, 21st street on the west, 16th and 17th streets on the east, from Pennsylvania avenue. He employed Stephen Hallet, an architect in Philadelphia, (the first architect of the United States Capitol), to draught a copy of his said large plan, which, with an essay on the city prepared by himself, he was to have published in Paris, expecting large returns from its sale.

On September 9, 1791, the Commissioners wrote Major L'Enfant, stating: "We have agreed that the Federal District shall be called 'The Territory of Columbia,' and the Federal city 'The City of Washington.' The title of the map will therefore be, 'A Map of the City of Washington, in the District of Columbia.'

"We have also agreed the streets be named alphabetically one way and numerically the other, the former into north and south letters, the latter into east and west numbers from the Capitol. Mr Ellicott will soon furnish you the soundings of the waters, to be incerted in the map. If you have no contrary directions, we wish about 10,000 of the maps to be struck on the best terms and as soon as possible."

September 21, 1791, L'Enfant was requested to have sufficient clay for 3,000,000 brick taken out from the foundations of the Capitol and President's house.

September 24, 1791, L'Enfant was instructed to direct three hundred copies of his plan of the Federal City to be transmitted to such parts of the Northern States as he may think proper.

October 22, 1791, L'Enfant is requested to search along the lands near the Potomac river for three acres of land, well stored with free-stone, and to purchase the same for the United States. He accordingly selected and purchased Wiggington's Island, on Aquia Run, County of Stafford, Va., on December 2, 1791, which contains twelve acres, and is still Government property.

It was his second plan that President Washington laid before Congress on December 13, 1791. L'Enfant was instructed by the President to clear away all obstructions in the way of his surveying lines. Mr Daniel Carroll, of Duddington, commenced to build a house directly upon one of the principal lines, and L'Enfant notified the builder that such was the case, and intimated that should the house be built, he would order it taken down. The house was partly built, but L'Enfant kept his word, and did have it taken down on Tuesday, the 22d of November, 1791, and having done so without consulting the Board of Commissioners, they became so indignant and gave such great annoyance to the President on account of that action as to cause L'Enfant to sever his official connection with the city on March 6, 1792. L'Enfant withheld his plan until the President prevailed upon him to take it to the engravers, and to superintend the work of its engraving. Respecting the publication of this engraving, he says: "After I generously permitted the completing of the engraving and had lent manuscript drafts, as were said wanting for correction, those manuscripts were detained. Finding my name erased from the title of

the map at the moment of publication, and leaving stand on it that of my assistants, I refused the revisal of the proofs in printing." Here ended his actions in connection with the beautiful city of his superb design. Who can say that Major Peter Charles L'Enfant's propositions of 1791 for embellishing the City of Washington, D. C., within its original limits, have not been carried out in course down to and in the year of our Lord, 1898?

We are glad that though the mighty empire, which he delighted to mention, has refused to rest his bones in a respectable cemetery, and mark his grave with a decent head-stone, there is a nobler monument still expanding—the Capital of his said empire, that will be more lasting to his honor than one of any other construction.

At the time when L'Enfant withheld his plan, his former assistant, Mr Ellicott, went to Philadelphia, and, with the assistance of his two brothers, prepared another plan of the city from a copy he had of L'Enfant's. He wrote the Commissioners, February 23, 1792, saying: "Major L'Enfant refused us the use of the original plan; what his motives were, God knows. The plan which we have furnished, I believe, will be found to answer the ground better than the large one in the Major's hands." This plan of Ellicott's was given to Samuel Blodget, Jr., to have it engraved at the City of Boston, and it was engraved there by a Samuel Hill in 1792; a proof-sheet of it was sent to Secretary of State Jefferson at Philadelphia, who wrote to the Commissioners on July 11, 1792, saying: "I now send a proof-sheet of the plan of the town engraving at Boston. I observe the soundings of the creek and river are not in it. It would be well to know of Mr Ellicott whether they were on the original sent to Boston. If

not, you will probably think it desirable to insert in this proof-sheet and send it to Boston, addressed to Mr. Blodget, under whose care the engraving is going on." Mr Ellicott, having admitted that he did not show the soundings upon his plan, was directed to insert them upon the proof-sheet; but prior to returning the proof-sheet to Boston, the engraving was received by Mr. Jefferson, and his soundings were never inserted therein.

The explanatory reference on L'Enfant's 1792 Philadelphia engraving, in which Ellicott's name is given, was placed there by L'Enfant, who placed his own name in its legend, stating, "By Peter Charles L'Enfant." By withholding the legend, and continuing the reference, assistant Ellicott has been honored at the expense of his superior, and confirming that honor by placing the same reference on his own Boston engraving.

The L'Enfant Philadelphia engraving was first sold at 4s. 8½d., and Ellicott's Boston engraving at 2s. 6d., showing which of the two was the better.

As many people believe, and as many affirm, that the city was originally surveyed and laid out from the 1792 Philadelphia engraving, I would say that said engraved map was only a guide or rule of action for laying off the city and to show the world how it was to be laid out, in avenues, streets and buildings, and that there existed a special large plan (b, p. 56) prepared on the same design and prior to that engraving, as already stated, and in proof thereof are the following references: March 14, 1792, Stephen Hallet prepared a reduction copy upon silk from L'Enfant's great plan. (a, p. 55.) Mr. Ellicott states on October 13, 1792, "Square No. 128 on original (b, p. 56) L'Enfant plan, is designated No. 166 on engraved plans now in

circulation, that square was divided (October 19, 1791) according to the number on Major L'Enfant's large plan." (a, p. 55.)

March 13, 1793, the Commissioners requested Mr. Ellicott to return "the plan of the outlines of the city." (a, p. 55.)

On April 9, 1793, they ordered that the "Outline plan to work by" be delivered in their office. It was delivered there by Mr. Ellicott on same date. (a, p. 55.) Mr. Ellicott says, in his letter dated June 17, 1793, "The plan from which we work"; and Isaac Briggs and Ben. Ellicott, in their letter dated September 20, 1793, say, "We can give the number of squares in the city from 'General Outline, or large Plan, from which we work.'" (a, p. 55.)

"Mr Andrew Ellicott having run a line from the Court-house, Alexandria, due southwest an half a mile, and thence southeast to Hunting Creek, to the beginning of the four lines of experiment." "The Commissioners, on April 15, 1791, attended by the surveyor and a large concourse of spectators at Jones' Point, and fixed a stone (No. 1, p. 51) at the same place, it being the beginning of the four lines of experiment." On June 6, 1792, Mr Ellicott was ordered to lay out the lines of the District of Columbia.

On January 1st, 1793, he submitted to the Commissioners "a report with his first map of the four lines of experiment, showing an half a mile on each side, including the district of territory, with a survey of the different waters within the territory."

The Commissioners sent a revised copy of this report and the plat to the President, who returned the plat for the purpose of having additions proposed by him shown thereon, and when so altered it was returned to the President, February 11, 1793.

Messrs Andrew, Joseph and Benjamin Ellicott and Isaac Briggs, all surveyors of Washington City, were laying off the permanent lines of the District of Columbia, and paid \$1,050.00 for that work on January 22, 1793.

Mr Andrew Ellicott, being L'Enfant's chief assistant, succeeded to the position of head of the surveying department immediately on L'Enfant's resignation; and when original proprietor, Davy Burns, designated him "the Surveyor-General, with a number of letters to his name," was a fully qualified surveyor, as is evident from L'Enfant's statement of his work as given on L'Enfant's engraved Philadelphia Plan of 1792, and from the other public surveys he had done in other parts of the United States. He had five assistant surveyors (two of them were his own brothers, Benjamin and Joseph Ellicott; the others were Isaac Briggs, George Fenwick, and James R. Dermott), with the necessary assistants for each surveyor. Of the surveyors named, it is of importance to introduce the last-named, James R. Dermott, who, prior to his becoming a city surveyor, was a professor of some institution of learning in the city of Alexandria, Va. He was highly recommended by one of the Commissioners, Dr. D. Stuart, and was appointed on March 24, 1792. Soon thereafter the Surveyor-General stated to the Commissioners that Dermott was the best and readiest calculator he had ever met. However, in the early fall of that same year he was sent by Andrew Ellicott in charge of a few colored men to cut down trees and brush on Pennsylvania avenue, and in a few days he was discharged. Dermott met Dr Stuart in Virginia shortly thereafter, to whom he said: "I have been discharged, and I am glad of it, for the reason of the imperfect surveying work now being done in Washington." The

doctor requested him to make that statement before the Board, but this he did not do until a second request had been made of him by the doctor, and then an investigation of the survey work was instituted. Several squares that had been returned were resurveyed, and none of them were found correct, and the Commissioners say, "Some squares were returned that never were measured." For said reasons, Mr Ellicott, with all his assistants, was discharged on March 12, 1793.

On April 9, 1793, the Commissioners prepared new rules for the Surveying Department, by which each surveyor was to delineate on a slip of paper each separate square surveyed by him, to state thereon the name of each street fronting that square, and to enter the length of each side of that square in lineal feet and fractions of inches, with date and his signature. These attested slips were designated "surveyors' returns." The city was to be surveyed in sections varying in size, as the Commissioners might order from time to time, those so surveyed embracing one hundred squares in some cases and two hundred and three hundred in others. The "returns" of these sections were drawn on "section" sheets of paper, on the scale of 200 feet to an inch, and, together with the small slips or "surveyors' returns," were sent to the office of the Commissioners, where we again find Professor Dermott, who would from the "surveyors' returns" prepare another section plan, and this he would compare with the section plan received from the field. If he discovered any difference between the two he would report it to the Commissioners; and when correct or corrected, his was to become a large plat, which was to be considered as a record. (That plan is on file in City Surveyor's Office.) He also divided each square into lots on a sheet of foolscap paper, on a scale of 40 feet to an inch; these were

signed by the Commissioners and the original proprietors, and designated "divisions of squares;" each standard lot was to contain 5,265 square feet, and he was to keep in methodical order all calculations of lots. The surveying formerly done was resurveyed, so that the surveying proper commenced April 9, 1793.

Mr Andrew Ellicott was finally discharged on July 19, 1793, having acted for only three months and ten days at the final resurvey of the city. He was succeeded on that date by Isaac Briggs and Benjamin and Joseph Ellicott, who, as the Commissioners aver, continued, as Mr Andrew Ellicott had previously done, charging all their own mistakes to Professor Dermott's gross ignorance and wickedness, and because the Commissioners did not discharge Dermott they said that he had stolen a copy of L'Enfant's map, and, without the Commissioners' knowledge, advertised in a newspaper, offering \$5.00 to stop the thief, and for the apprehension of Dermott. The plan referred to being on file during this time in the office of the Commissioners, they discharged Mr Briggs on November 2, 1793, and also Benjamin and Joseph Ellicott on January 28, 1794.

On December 17, 1793, the Commissioners wrote, in reply to Mr Andrew Ellicott, stating, "We have had no intercourse with the President or Mr Jefferson on the Plate or Map of the Territory, and decline going into that business with which we have nothing to do."

On August 30, 1792, the Commissioners directed Surveyor George Fenwick to set up stones at certain distances in the north and south and east and west lines, from which the city was laid out. On March 25, 1794, they also requested the said Mr Fenwick to have a large stone lettered "The beginning of the Territory of Columbia," prepared and fixed at the beginning of the

territory, in the presence of some of the gentlemen who were present at the fixing of the small stone now there. (No. 1, p. 51—p. 57.)

Surveyor Thomas Freeman succeeded Benjamin and Joseph Ellicott on March 25, 1794. He reported, June 21, 1794, having carefully adjusted the center of North and South Capitol streets by planting four cut stones in that line, and that he had planted a large stone at Jones' Point in the presence of two gentlemen (Col. Marsteller and one other), who were present at the planting of a small temporary boundary in the same place. This large stone had cut on it, "The beginning of the Territory of Columbia," showing that the present stone, lettered as stated, is not the original stone placed there on April 15, 1791.

Freeman reported on July 4, 1795, that the surveying of the city had been completed on the 25th of the preceding month (June 25, 1795), and that he had fixed at Rock Creek, in the road leading from Georgetown to Bladensburg, where a small temporary boundary stood, a large stone lettered, "First Boundary of the City of Washington." "And from thence run a street 80 feet wide, which bounds the city to the second boundary; the north side thereof runs in the center of the road; this street I produced to the third boundary, where it falls into Fifteenth street east, and with part of Fifteenth and C streets north, completes a street which bounds the city from Rock Creek to the Eastern Branch; the north side of the boundary stones stand in the north line of the street, so that these stones stand in the city." * * *

On June 15, 1795, the Commissioners "ordered James R. Dermott to prepare a plat of the city, with every public appropriation plainly and distinctly delineated, together with the appropriation now made by the

Board for the National University and Mint." This is the plan which was to be annexed to President Washington's official instrument, dated March 2, 1797, and was afterward so annexed by President John Adams, on July 23, 1798. It was designated by the Commissioners as the "Appropriation Map." This map shows 132 more building squares in the city than either L'Enfant's or Ellicott's engraved maps. Of this map Commissioners Scott, Thornton and White say to the President of the United States, "The Dermott map is the evidence of public property in the city." Many experts of the present day affirmed that it was prepared by Ellicott, until I produced the evidence given on the new issue of that map.

On the completion of the city surveying, June 25, 1795, Surveyor Thomas Freeman was required to take the levels of the city. He completed that work on section plans copied from Dermott's large 1793-5 map, and resigned office July 7, 1796.

On December 1, 1796, President Washington wrote the Commissioners: "A university was never contemplated by Major L'Enfant in the plan of the city, which was laid before Congress; it had its rise from another source. This plan you shall receive by the first safe hand who may be going to the Federal City. By it you may discover (tho. almost obliterated) the directions given to the engravers by Mr. Jefferson with a pencil, what parts to omit." On December 5, 1796, the Commissioners, replying to the President, say: "We have received L'Enfant's plan of the city." There are several recorded references to this plan as being on file in the Commissioners' office at different times down to recent years. I found it there in 1873, and it is still there in 1898, and is now 107 years old.

Freeman was succeeded by Nicholas King on September 21, 1796, who prepared a "large map of Water street," extending from Rock Creek eastward to appropriation No. 13, where the present jail stands. That map he lodged in the office of the Commissioners on March 8, 1797. He resigned office in favor of his father, Robert King, Sr., on September 12, 1797, who was appointed on the same day.

James Reed Dermott, whose actions were highly approved of by all the Commissioners for six years of active service in connection with surveying and draughting the plats of the city, quitted the City Surveyor's office January 2, 1798. When Robert King, Sr., became the only existing City Surveyor, many houses were being built in different parts of the city, causing the duties of the office to be more than Mr. King could properly manage. He used that as his reason for asking the Commissioners to appoint his son Robert as assistant surveyor. He was appointed as such on July 1, 1800. Robert, Jr., prepared a map of the section of ground fronting the present State Department and Seventeenth street, showing the lot that was to be conveyed to the Queen of Portugal; it is signed "R King," and dated August, 1798. This plan is in the office of the Oldest Inhabitants' Association of this city.

The Commissioners state in their Journal of Proceedings, under date of May 4, 1802: "Report received from Robert King with an altered map of the city in conformity to the directions of the Board, and according to the large map of Water street." Both Robert King, Sr., and Jr., resigned office August 13, 1802. Nicholas King, the other son of Robert King, Sr., was appointed a second time as City Surveyor, about June 1, 1803. In the office of Public Buildings and Grounds there is a large portfolio, comprising sixteen sheets, the legend

of which is: "The King plats of the City of Washington, in the District of Columbia," and upon its first page or sheet is: "Plan of the City of Washington, laid down agreeably to the Surveyors' Returns, by Nicholas King, S. C. W., 1803." I am obliged to say that Nicholas King could not prepare such a portfolio during the time he was in office, in the year 1803. There are upon record no instructions to him to prepare such a map. I have identified the draughting of it as the work of Robert King, Jr., and said on the witness stand that I believed it was the map received by the Commissioners from Robert King on May 4, 1802.

A few of the leveling sections of the city bear the name of Nicholas King, but the sections themselves were prepared in 1795-6 by Thomas Freeman, who was in office prior to Nicholas King, who died in office on May 12, 1812, and was succeeded by his brother, Robert, on May 21, 1812, who was in office till June 1, 1821.

Having failed to recover the Boston plate, and being unable to procure a printed copy of it, I obtained the loan of one of its original prints, and had it photographed, on which, as stated, "there are no soundings shown upon it," and furthermore it is, as said of it by Mr Ellicott, "smaller than L'Enfant's."

The Philadelphia plate has the soundings upon it, and it is deposited at the United States Coast Survey Office.

The next engraved map of the city is designated the "Robert King Map of the City of Washington." It has upon it the following legend: "A map of the City of Washington, in the District of Columbia, established as the permanent Seat of Government of the United States of America. Taken from actual survey, as laid out on the ground. By Robert King, Surveyor of the

City of Washington. Entered according to act of Congress. Engraved by C. Schwarz, Washn."

The earliest reference to this map that I have yet seen is the statement that a package numbered four, containing a copy of it, was placed in the cavity of the foundation corner stone of the City Hall, on August 22, 1820.

The next engraved map of the city is DeKraft's, which is dated 1833. And the next is a printed map of the District of Columbia, by Wm. Eliot, dated 1837.

In reference to the next I quote from the Congressional Globe, Vol. 24, Part 2, 1st Sess., 32d Cong., 1851-2, folio 1362:

"Mr Douglas submitted the following resolution, which was agreed to:

"Resolved, That the Secretary cause the maps of the District of Columbia and City of Washington, and the plats of the squares and lots in the city of Washington, heretofore printed under an order of the Senate, to be bound."

On perusal of this resolution, and having seen the said bound document, a desire became urgent to find where were the engraved copper plates used in printing it. After a continuous searching for two years I was rewarded with success and deposited them in the U. S. Coast Survey Office. The copper plate used in printing Mr Ellicott's Boston plan of the City of Washington appearing in said document, and now in the Coast and Geodetic Survey Office, is an imperfect reproduction of the original plate.

The large plans of Water street, in twelve sheets, prepared by Nicholas King in 1797, being the best plans for defining Water street, were, with many other city plans, taken out of the Commissioners' office before I became custodian there. These large plans were

required for important Government purposes, but they could not be produced; ultimately I succeeded in obtaining them from a gentleman who took them out of the office twenty-six years prior to returning them.

There is also a lithographed map of the city; its legend is: "Map of the City of Washington, in the District of Columbia, showing the lines of the various Properties at the Division with the Original Proprietors in 1792. Copyrighted by James M. Stewart, Washington, D. C., 1884." Many other maps might be introduced, but, as Mr Marcus Baker has given such a full list of them in a previous paper, I deem those alone mentioned will suffice for the present.

I desire to state that there is one record book missing, which I am, as yet, unable to recover, and I take the liberty of referring to it in your presence, in the hope that by your valuable assistance it may be obtained and returned to where it rightly belongs. It is the second volume of the Commissioners' daily proceedings, containing accounts of their actions from August 31, 1795, to October 24, 1796, in which the minutes of the meetings of the Commissioners are regularly entered and signed by them, "Gustavus Scott, William Thornton; and Alexander White, Commissioners."

The number of various old section plans of Washington City now in existence are:

Eleven in office of Commissioner of Public Buildings.

Eleven in office of the Oldest Inhabitants of the City.

Thirty-three in office of the City Surveyor.

Fifty-one in the Peter Force Collection in the U. S. Congressional Library.

Making in all 106.

I desire to correct some imperfect statements lately appearing in public print, and for that reason I state, first, that a Mr William Elliott, a civil engineer, emi-

grated from England in the year 1810 to the city of Washington, where he became known as a celebrated teacher of algebra and mathematics. He was appointed to a position in the Pension Office of the War Department, and being commissioned by the President of the United States to fix the longitude of the Capitol from Greenwich, England, on April 10, 1821, he resigned his position in the Pension Office on the 30th of that month, and completed his instrumental Celestial observations for the longitude on February 21, 1822. (Its calculations were made by Wm. Lambert.) He built a frame house for a private observatory at the rear of his dwelling in March, 1824,* and on April 2, 1824, he was engaged running a meridian line to the north of his observatory. He was appointed surveyor of the city of Washington in 1832, and continued in that office till his death in 1837.

The first United States Naval Observatory was brought into existence chiefly by the efforts of the said Mr William Elliott. Lieut. L. M. Goldsborough, U. S. N., was the first officer who was placed in charge of that office in the Navy Department, in the year 1830. Lieut. Goldsborough was succeeded in that year by Lieut. Wilkes, U. S. N., who obtained permission from the Naval Commissioners to remove the Observatory office to a small frame building on a high elevation that was located at the rear of Mr William Elliott's residence, No. 222 North Capitol street, situated on the west side between B and C streets, and N. 5 degrees 0 minutes W., 1,200 feet (nearly) from the center of the Capitol, being the same observatory as was built by Mr Ellicott in March, 1824.

* From his notes, in possession of his granddaughter, Miss E. Elliott, 216 North Capitol St.

Lieut. Wilkes was succeeded by Lieut. James M. Gilliss, U. S. N., in the year 1838, and continued in charge of the observatory till 1842. In April, 1841, he erected a massy obelisk of sandstone, 18 feet high and 14 inches square at the top, for a meridian mark, from the Observatory on Capitol Hill. It was located on the Beall property, 74 feet (nearly) west of the line of the west side of North Capitol street, and 35 feet (nearly) south of the line of the south side of North R street. It was originally designated the "Gillis Obelisk." Its sandstone material is now lying on the ground around its former position.*

Second—"The first Meridian of the United States" intersects the center of the north and south basement doors of the President's house, as stated, in Nicholas King's report, dated October 15, 1804, which is merely a report prepared by him at the date it bears, describing how the said meridian was established on September 20, 1793. He distinctly states in his said report, "In running the meridian line and fixing the several points on that line with temporary posts driven in the ground, I acted only in the capacity of assistant, conforming entirely to the instructions of Mr Briggs." * * * This Mr Briggs became one of the chief surveyors of the city, July 19, 1793, and was discharged November 2, 1793.

In December, 1804, Nicholas King was the only surveyor of the city, and adds the confirmation, "It devolves on me to describe the mode pursued in ascertaining the line, the required intersections and replacing the temporary posts set in the ground with stone and pier." Doubtless for the purpose stated in his sec-

* I am indebted to the courtesy of Professor Wm. Harkness, U. S. N., Director of the U. S. Naval Observatory, Washington, D. C., for the above statement.

ond endorsement, i. e., "To be filed in the office of state as a record of the demarkation of the first Meridian of the United States, October 15, 1804." A careful perusal of the report shows that it refers to two different periods of time.

John Lenthall, a superintendent under Latrobe at the United States Capitol, attests the account, \$171.21 $\frac{1}{2}$, for the materials and building the meridian pier or Jefferson obelisk, dated December 18, 1804.

The pier was frequently used by surveyors as a bench-mark, and as a guy-post for barges and other boats; and, not being kept in repair, soon became demolished. Finding its stone scattered around in 1872, when extending Executive avenue past that old landmark, not only the scattered stones, but a considerable part of its upper foundation was used in the formation of that avenue bed. The old surface of the ground was resurfaced to the depth of several feet, and the ground extended two hundred feet nearly into what was formerly part of Goose Creek, thereby greatly altering the old ground surface. Two or more engineers tried to recover the foundation of the pier at different times about ten years since. The obelisk erected by N. King southwest of the National Monument, on the meridian west from the south end of the Capitol, was removed in 1888 to the property yard of Public Buildings and Grounds, leaving nothing to mark its original position.

And third—October 9, 1889, I was instructed to recover the foundation of the said pier, and did so in the following manner: Running a line due south by the center of the Executive Mansion, by that of Virginia avenue, from Rock Creek, to intersection of my first line, point No. 1; by that of Virginia avenue, from Eastern Branch to point No. 1; by that of East Capitol

street to point No. 1; and by that of Louisiana avenue to point No. 1; all of the said lines intersecting each other very nearly, I fixed that point and excavated the ground about a foot clear of the peg on its western side, to the depth of 6 feet 6 inches, and struck the west side of the old foundation. I then extended the said lines and fixed them 20 feet 0 inches on each side of peg No. 1; then excavated a square of eight feet and found point No. 1 was exactly perpendicular over the center of the foundation. Though using the courses mentioned by Nicholas King, I did not know of the existence of his report till I accidentally found it in the State Department, January 5, 1891. The pit was left open for six weeks, so that all who wished might see for themselves. During that time a granite block 3 feet 3 inches by 2 feet 0 inches by 2 feet 0 inches, weighing 2,132 pounds, nearly, was prepared; the old foundation was taken out, and under it a lady's thimble was found. I have not seen anything to confirm the statement that "it was placed there by Mrs. Jefferson and was the reason for designating the obelisk the Jefferson Pier." A cement concrete foundation was laid for the stone, on which it was set, standing 22½ inches above ground, having on its west face the following inscription: "Position of Meridian Post, erected September 20, 1793, and Position of the Jefferson Stone Pier, erected December 18, 1804; and Recovered and Re-erected, December 1, 1889." Just as it was set in position, and before the ground was levelled around it, I received orders to lower it as at present, which accounts for no inscription being visible above ground.

Finally—I would explain how I came to have the opportunity to know what is upon record in reference to early maps and surveyors of the city, and say that when placed in charge of the office of Commissioners

of Public Buildings, and all documents therein, in 1876, my instructions were to peruse carefully all the books and other documents placed under my care, and to familiarize myself with their contents. The Attorney-General of the United States sent me a letter, dated December 31, 1886, directing me to assist the Attorney of the District of Columbia in preparing evidences of the case, "The United States vs. F. M. Morris et al.", with whom, and at which, I have been engaged down to 1896, giving required evidences from the said records; their contents were fresh in my memory at the time I was asked to prepare this paper (except the few references to my own actions in connection with surveying made in this city). All the other references to matters and persons were culled from the statements on file in this office (though by no means exhausted), purposely passing over some statements to avoid anything which might appear dishonorable in any person referred to.